WATCHING YOU WATCHING YOU

BY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis consists of four parts.

Part one is a written dialogue in which I respond to the words and the thoughts of the photographer, Diane Arbus. Through responding to Arbus' thoughts, I had hoped to make clear my own thoughts and feelings about photography and the reasons why I photograph.

Part two is a description with drawn sketches. It describes my original plan for the public presentations of my project.

Part three consists of photographic collages with brief written descriptions. It describes the actual public presentations that took place.

Part four is a written description of the public presentation project including:

1. My original concept and motivation for doing the project.
2. A description of how the concept evolved into its final physical form.
3. What participation in the project meant to the participants and myself.

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Part One, The Words and Thoughts of Diane Arbus, and My Thoughts
My favorite thing is to go where I've never been. For me there's something about just going into somebody else's house. When it comes time to go, if I have to take a bus to somewhere or if I have to take a cab uptown, it's like I've got a blind date. It's always seemed something like that to me. And sometimes I have a sinking feeling of, Oh God it's time and I really don't want to go. And then, once I'm on my way, something terrific takes over about the sort of queasiness of it and how there's absolutely no method for control.

-Diane Arbus-

Taking photographs was probably Diane Arbus' favorite thing. And her other favorite thing was to go where she had never been. It seems that they look like each other, going somewhere and taking photographs, like her photograph of twin girls standing in front of a brick wall. We photograph things in front of us, but at this moment, we can't see the photograph that we have taken. Even Polaroid takes 20 sec. until an image comes. We don't know the photograph that we have taken until we see it. This is the true not only with photographs but for each moment. When we see things, at the same moment, what we see becomes our past perception. Time runs and never stops. Watching her photograph of the twin girls makes us dizzy, because our eyes are forced to move from the girl on the right side to the one on the left side then again to right, to left, to right, by the temptation to examine each of the twin girls.

If I were just curious, it would be very hard to say to someone, "I want to come to your house and have you talk to me
and tell me the story of your life." I mean people are going to say, "You're crazy." Plus they're going to keep mighty guarded. But the camera is a kind of license. A lot of people, they want to be paid that much attention and that's a reasonable kind of attention to be paid.

-Diane Arbus-

We are eager to know who we are; what we look like and what we think about ourselves. We see ourselves in a mirror and think about who we are. Our faces in a mirror are reversed and the question about ourselves won't be answered. In front of a mirror, we are watching the mirror and thinking about ourselves. It is like meditating by ourselves on a small island in the ocean. Nobody knows who we are and what we are thinking. Diane Arbus photographed people. Taking photograph of something, for example a photograph of people starving in Africa wouldn't give something to eat to them right away, but we will realize that there are those starving people in the world. Taking a photograph of people would make us be aware of who we are. I wrote in "who we are", however, I do not know about it. I think that it's not only me but also, again I think, everybody. You would say that you know who you are. All right, I trust you. But I still don't know who I am. If you could tell me about it, I would appreciate it. Even if you say that you have the same question as mine. I will like you.

Actually, they tend to like me. I'm extremely likeable with them. I think I'm kind of two-faced. I'm very ingratiating. It really kind of annoys me. I'm just sort of a little too nice. Everything is Oooo. I hear myself saying,"How terrific," and
there's this woman making a face. I really mean it's terrific. I don't mean I wish I looked like that. I don't mean I wish my children looked like that. I don't mean in my private life I want to kiss you. But I mean that's amazingly, undeniably something.

-Diane Arbus-

Death is amazingly and undeniably something. We have one life and one death. Everybody living now is going to die. 200 years later anyone who is living now won't be alive. We don't know what our death is. We don't know if it has come, even when it comes. Death is so close and so far away. For me, I'm like death to myself. I'm close to myself and also so far away from me. We are living on the ground which is ourselves. And we are death and life. If someone wants to take a picture of people, it's impossible to avoid thinking about it.

There are always two things that happen. One is recognition and the other is that it's totally peculiar. But there's some sense in which I always identify with them.

-Diane Arbus-

Arbus said that there were always two things that happen. It sounds to me, actually she was talking about people who she photographed, like talking about some principle in life or something like very important things. I don't know what she meant by recognition and peculiar, but I think that every morning I wake up and do something... that is recognition to me, because every morning I remember that is my routine. If I don't wake up, or if I wake up and I am sitting in the chair without eating breakfast, think-
ing anything, and breathing, it would be totally peculiar to me. But what is funny in it is that it's not peculiar to you because you know that people die every day, so this is recognition of death to you, it's like spring in New York, or Boston, and every year it comes. It's like blue or red.

Everybody has that thing where they need to look one way but they come out looking another way and that's what people observe. You see someone on the street and essentially what you notice about them is the flaw. It's just extraordinary that we should have been given these peculiarities. And, not content with what we were given, we create a whole other set. Our whole guise is like giving a sign to the world to think of us in a certain way but there's a point between what you want people to know about you and what you can't help people knowing about you. And that has to do with what I've always called the gap between intention and effect. I mean if you scrutinize reality closely enough, if in some way you really, really get to it, it becomes fantastic. You know it really is totally fantastic that we look like this and you sometimes see that very clearly in a photograph. Something is ironic in the world and it has to do with the fact that what you intend never comes out like you intend it.

-Diane Arbus-

Until we stop watching a photograph and shift our eyes to where we are, everything in the photograph stays. We can destroy a photograph but we can't destroy an image. What I tried to say is that we can't destroy an image by tearing a print. Once the print was seen by someone, it would be really hard to extinguish the image. And another nature of photography is
that the photograph of a man standing beside a bed and holding a sock in his hand doesn't say that he is going to work; he may go to work. It is like a deficiency of photography, but if this nature comes along with the fact that we can destroy a print but we can't extinguish an image, I think, it becomes a strength of photography. Because you remember the image forever, and you think about it.

What I'm trying to describe is that it's impossible to get out of your skin into somebody else's. And that's what all this is a little about. That somebody else's tragedy is not the same as your own.

-Diane Arbus-

We can't share somebody else's tragedy. We are just sorry about it. When there is something that makes me feel. I photograph it. Then, maybe you will find something that makes you feel in my photograph. I don't know whether what you find is what I felt, or not.

Another thing is a photograph has to be specific. I remember a long time ago when I first began to photograph I thought, There are an awful lot of people in the world and it is going to be terribly hard to photograph all of them, so if I photograph some kind of generalized human being, everybody will recognize it. It'll be like what they used to call the common man or something. It was my teacher, Lisette Model, who finally made it clear to me that the more specific you are, the more generalized it'll be. You really have to face that thing. And there are certain evasions, certain nicenesses that I think you have to get out of.

-Diane Arbus-
A photograph tells anything specifically. What a photograph tells is actually what a photograph told. Another thing in photography is what you want to photograph. "You really have to face that thing.", said Arbus. My question to her is for what and to whom things that you want to photograph have to be specific. To a photographer, it is very simple that the more specific what you want to photograph is, the more specific a photograph will be. But, to a person looking at photographs it will be like the more specific you are, the more general it will be. Or another way is that the more general you are, the more specific it will be. If you really want to say something about the world, I think, you should decide to photograph everything.

The process itself has a kind of exactitude, a kind of scrutiny that we're not normally subject to. I mean that we don't subject each other to. We're nicer to each other than the intervention of the camera is going to make us. It's a little bit cold, a little bit harsh.

-Diane Arbus-

We don't see things that we don't want to see. Once you turn a camera towards things, it photographs everything that you don't and do want.

Now, I don't mean to say that all photographs have to be mean. Sometimes they show something really nicer in fact than what you felt, or oddly different. But in a way this scrutiny has to do with not evading facts, not evading what it really looks like.

-Diane Arbus-
What photography really respects is what things really look like. It could be mean or nice. To be nice or mean would not be the most important.

Freaks was a thing I photographed a lot. It was one of the first things I photographed and it had a terrific kind of excitement for me. I just used to adore them. I still do adore some of them. I don't quite mean they're my best friends but they made me feel a mixture of shame and awe. There's a quality of legend about freaks. Like a person in a fairy tale who stops you and demands that you answer a riddle. Most people go through life dreading they'll have a traumatic experience. Freaks were born with their trauma. They've already passed their test in life. They're aristocrats.

-Diane Arbus-

Laughing is a strictly accurate reaction to what has happened in us. We are actually subject to it. If there's something funny, it is difficult to stop laughing. I think that a strong subject of photography would be something like laughing which we can't control and hide it. For Arbus, freaks were the subject of her work, because they can't avoid their trauma. They are confronting their trauma, and for us to confront photographs of freaks is for us to confront our trauma.

I'm very little drawn to photographing people that are known or even subjects that are known. They fascinate me when I've barely heard of them and the minute they get public, I become terribly blank about them.

-Diane Arbus-
Whether you like McDonald's or hate it is a personal matter. I don't think that McDonald's would fascinate Arbus, because it is too public. But I think that she might like people who eat at McDonald's.

Sometimes I can see a photograph or a painting, I see it and I think, That's not the way it is. I don't mean a feeling of, I don't like it. I mean the feeling that this is fantastic, but there's something wrong. I guess it's my own sense of what a fact is. Something will come up in me very strongly of No, a terrific No. It's a totally private feeling I get of how different it really is.

-Diane Arbus-

Someone told me of W. Eugene Smith's prints were made from two different negatives. He wanted photography to serve as medium for what he wanted to say about what he saw. Contrarily, Arbus wanted to think of photography as a tool to examine something that we haven't understood.

I'm not saying I get it only from pictures I don't like. I also get it from pictures I like a lot. You come outdoors and all you've got is you and all photographs begin to fall away and you think, My God, it's really totally different. I don't mean you can do it precisely like it is, but you can do it more like it is.

-Diane Arbus-

We can do it more like it is. But I don't know whether "We can do it more like it is," is enough or not. There is Bob Dylan's song that
said, "when you find out that you've reached the top, you are on the bottom." We try to get something we never can get, and it's like something we can only see in a dream.

I used to have this notion when I was a kid that the minute you said anything, it was no longer true. Of course it would have driven me crazy very rapidly if I hadn't dropped it, but there's something similar in what I'm trying to say. That once it's been done, you want to go someplace else. There's just some sense of straining.

-Diane Arbus-

I sometimes suddenly open my eyes in bed very early in the morning when the birds start to sing. Once I started listening to it, I was caught by listening to it. Then, I noticed that they responded to each other. I heard one bird sing from where it was very close to my room. I heard it very clearly, then another one sang from a longer distance. It sounded much softer than the other's. They didn't want to say anything to each other. They just responded to each other. Listening to them made my imagination grow. I started to think about the time we couldn't speak, when we were just screaming. Maybe we stamped our feet once, then the next person responded by stamping twice, and also we were listening to birds. If someone was angry, the stamping probably would not be gentle. We expressed and received our emotions in some way. It was simple, basic, and very primitive. It is frightening to think about who we were. They must have always been very frus-
trated. But I think that everything they saw was beautiful.

It's always seemed to me that photography tends to deal with facts whereas film tends to deal with fiction. The best example I know is when you go to the movies and you see two people in bed, you're willing to put aside the fact that you perfectly well know that there was a director and a cameraman and assorted lighting people all in that same room and the two people in bed weren't really alone. But when you look at a photograph, you can never put that aside.

-Diane Arbus-

Photography seems like an explosion rather than cooking. Once we push a button, it explodes. A photographer says let's explode a river, mountains, people, or whatever. A film director says that he wants to cook something. He adds salt and pepper, makes the flame on the stove burner higher and lower. We eat food in a restaurant. We don't know who cooked it. It's someone in the kitchen. What I wrote about film is about the worst kind of film. What I wrote about a photograph is about the best kind of photograph. Or what I wrote about a photograph is about the best kind of art that I believe.

I suppose a lot of these observations are bound to be after the fact. I mean they're nothing you can do to yourself to get yourself to work. You can't make yourself work by putting something beautiful on the wall or by knowing yourself. Very often knowing yourself isn't really going to lead you anywhere. Sometimes it's going to leave you kind of blank. Like, here I am,
there is me, I've got a history, I've got things that are mys-
terious to me in the world, I've got things that bug me in the
world. But there are moments when all that doesn't seem to avail.
-Diane Arbus-

"It's going to leave you kind of blank. Like, here I am, there is
me.", said Arbus. If we could weigh this blankness, I think, it must be
as heavy as our body. We sometimes feel that it's too heavy and at other
times we forget the weight. When I hear Bob Dylan sing, "how does it feel,
to be on your own, with no direction home, like a complete unknown, like
a rolling stone?", he makes me think: what the blankness is in me?

Another thing I've worked from is reading. It happens
very obliquely. I don't mean I read something and rush out
and make a picture of it. And I hate that business of illustrat-
ing poems. But here's an example of something I've never photo-
graphed that's like a photograph to me. There's a Kafka story
called "Investigations of a Dog" which I read a long, long time
ago and I've read it since a number of times. It's a terrific
story written by the dog and it's the real dog life of a dog.
-Diane Arbus-

The life of a turtle, a bank teller, or a photographer maybe someone
wants to take photographs of them. I think, a photographer is like a
musician and a recording engineer, or music and a tape recorder at the
same time.

Actually, one of the first pictures I ever took must have been
related to that story because it was of a dog. This was about
twenty years ago and I was living in the summer on Martha's Vineyard. There was a dog that came at twilight every day. A big dog. Kind of a mutt. He had sort of Weimaraner eyes, grey eyes. I just remember it was very haunting. He would come and just stare at me in what seemed a very mythic way. I mean a dog, not barking, not licking, just looking right through you. I don't think he liked me. I did take a picture of him but it wasn't very good.

-Diane Arbus-

If the dog that Arbus photographed had a camera, and he photographed her, it would have been an interesting photograph. She said, "He would come and just stare at me in what seemed a very mythic way." It seems that the dog was interested in her more than she was in him.

I don't particularly like dogs. Well, I love stray dogs, dogs who don't like people. And that's the kind of dog picture I would take if ever I took a dog picture.

-Diane Arbus-

One thing I would never photograph is dogs lying in the mud.

-Diane Arbus-

In the beginning of photographing I used to make very grainy things. I'd be fascinated by what the grain did because it would make a kind of tapestry of all little dots and everything would be translated into this medium of dots. Skin would be the same as water would be the same as sky and you
were dealing mostly in dark and light, not so much in flesh and blood.

-Diane Arbus-

But when I'd been working for a while with all these dots, I suddenly wanted terribly to get through there. I wanted to see the real differences between things. I'm not talking about textures. I really hate that, the idea that a picture can be interesting simply because it shows texture. I mean that just kills me. I don't see what's interesting about texture. It really bores the hell out of me. But I wanted to see the difference between flesh and material, the densities of different kinds of things: air and water and shiny. So I gradually had to learn different techniques to make it come clear. I began to get terribly hyped on clarity.

-Diane Arbus-

People live, and we eat food. But why we are living is not to eat food. Food keeps our life alive. Have you ever heard people talking about wine for an hour, or about cognac? What kind of wine do you like or cognac? So what?

Would you like to spend an hour talking about dots of a photograph?

I used to have a theory about photographing. It was a sense of getting in between two actions, or in between action and re-pose. I don't mean to make a big deal of it. It was just like an expression I didn't see or wouldn't have seen. One of the excitements of strobe at one time was that you were essentially
blind at the moment you took the picture. I mean it alters the light enormously and reveals things you don't see. In fact that's what made me really sick of it. I began to miss light like it really is and now I'm trying to get back to some kind of obscurity where at least there's normal obscurity.

-Diane Arbus

I use a strobe. I want to show everything that I can show. Photography needs light; the sun, a tungsten light, a strobe light. I like a strobe because I can show everything that I can show. But I agree with Arbus, there's something that we can't see in a photograph. If I show everything that I can show, you will know what I can't photograph.

Lately I've been struck with how I really love what you can't see in a photograph. An actual physical darkness. And it's very thrilling for me to see darkness again.

-Diane Arbus-

Arbus was more interested in what the grain gives us than simply in what the grain does. It's not graininess of a print, or fine graininess that shows texture. It's clear separation of materials rather than texture of them. It's the clear separation in the photograph of a man who is standing on the floor, in front of the wall. It's not the photograph of a man standing in the floor, and on the wall.

Not a sense of getting in between two actions, or something that we miss in the moment we photograph; what she wanted was an actual physical darkness which she could get only from getting clarity of normal obscurity.
What she did is like digging in the ground. The bottom gets farther and farther from her. It's like, not something missing, but something that we never can get to.

The following paragraph would explain her feeling towards reality

One of the things I felt I suffered from as a kid was I never felt adversity. I was confirmed in a sense of unreality which I could only feel as unreality. And the sense of being immune was, ludicrous as it seems, a painful one. It was as if I didn't inherit my own kingdom for a long time. The world seemed to me to belong to the world. I could learn things but they never seemed to be my own experience.

-Diane Arbus-

What's thrilling to me about what's called technique--I hate to call it that because it sounds like something up your sleeve--but what moves me about it is that it comes from some mysterious deep place. I mean it can have something to do with the paper and the developer and all that stuff, but it comes mostly from some very deep choices somebody has made that take a long time and keep haunting them.

-Diane Arbus-

We are in a kind of maze which has more than one way to be followed. Maybe because of what we do, we won't get through it. Or what we do may change the direction of the path, and make it like a maze. You will be in another place. It depends on what you do. A photographer seems like the person who makes her maze and at the same time she is trying to get
through it. Maybe, not only a photographer, but all of us are like that.

Invention is mostly this kind of subtle, inevitable thing.
People get closer to the beauty of their invention. They get narrower and more particular about it. Invention has a lot to do with a certain kind of light some people have and with the print quality and the choice of subject. It's a million choices you make. It's luck in a sense, or even ill luck. Some people hate a certain kind complexity. Others only want that complexity. But none of that is really intentional. I mean it comes from your nature, your identity. We have all got an identity. You can't avoid it. It's what's left when you take everything else away. I think the most beautiful inventions are the ones you don't think of.

-Diane Arbus-

A photograph comes from our identity. A boring photograph doesn't come from our identity.

Some pictures are tentative forays without your even know--in it. They become methods. It's important to take bad pictures. It's the bad ones that have to do with what you've never done before. They make you recognize something you hadn't seen in a way that will make you recognize it when you see it again.

-Diane Arbus-

Bad or good, mine or someone else's photographs affect what I do. Each last one I have done affects me very much. I see something I want to change, or I see something I like. And I do the next one. This is like ONE, TWO comes, then THREE
I hate the idea of composition. I don't know what good composition is. I mean I guess I must know something about it from doing it a lot and feeling my way into it and into what I like. Sometimes for me composition has to do with a certain brightness or a certain coming to restness and other times it has to do with funny mistakes. There's a kind of rightness and wrongness and sometimes I like rightness and sometimes I like wrongness. Composition is like that.

-Diane Arbus-

Composition, I think, is how we photographed something. We photograph something rather than compose it. We recognize how we photographed when we look at a print. We chose it from contact sheets. If we want to photograph anything we want to, we have made a composition already. This is my thought.

The following paragraph is about Arbus' composition.

Recently I did a picture--I've had this experience before--and I made rough prints of a number of them. There was something wrong in all of them. I felt I'd sort of missed it and I figured I'd go back. But there was one that was just totally peculiar. It was a terrible dodo of a picture. It looks to me a little as if the lady's husband took it. It's terribly head-on and sort of ugly and there's something terrific about it. I've gotten to like it better and better and now I'm secretly sort of nutty about it.

-Diane Arbus-
I think that the camera is something of a nuisance in a way. It's recalcitrant. It's determined to do one thing and you may want to do something else. You have to fuse what you want and what the camera wants. It's like a horse. Well, that's a bad comparison because I'm not much of a horseback rider, but I mean you get to learn what it will do. I've worked with a couple of them. One will be terrific in certain situations, or I can make it be terrific. Another will be very dumb but sometimes I kind of like that dumbness. It'll do, you know. I get a great sense that they're different from me, I don't feel that total identity with the machine. I mean I can work it fine, although I'm not so great actually. Sometimes when I'm winding it, it'll get stuck or something will go wrong and I just start clicking everything and suddenly very often it's all right again. That's my feeling about machines. If you sort of look the other way, they'll get fixed. Except for certain ones.

-Diane Arbus-

There's no line in photography between what a photographer does and what a camera does. They're fused into one thing. A photographer tells how a camera is used, and what the photographer got from the camera.

There used to be this moment of panic when I still can get what I'd look in the ground glass and it would all look ugly to me and I wouldn't know what was wrong. Sometimes it's
like looking in a kaleidoscope. You shake it around and it
just won't shake out right. I used to think if I could jumble
it up, it would all go away. But short of that, since I couldn't
do that, I'd just back up or start to talk or, I don't know,
go someplace else. But I don't think that's the sort of thing
you can calculate on because there's always this mysterious
thing in the process.

-Diane Arbus-

I don't do anything if I don't see anything interesting, or I'm
not interested in anything.

Very often when you go to photograph it's like you're
going for an event. Say it's a beauty contest. You picture
it in your mind a little bit, that there'll be these people
who will be the judges and they'll be choosing the winner
from all these contestants and then you go there and it's not
like that at all. Very often an event happens scattered and
the account of it will look to you in your mind like it's going
to be very straight and photographable. But actually one per-
son is over there and another person is over here and they
don't get together. Even when you go to do a family, you want
to show the whole family, but how often are the mother and
father and two kids all on the same side of the room? Unless
you tell them to go there.

-Diane Arbus-
I work from awkwardness. By that I mean I don't like to arrange things. If I stand in front of something, instead of arranging it, I arrange myself.

-Diane Arbus-

If we find anything interesting, it could be a motive for photographing. What moved Arbus to photograph "Girl with a cigar in Washington Square Park, N.Y.C. 1965" must be the cigar, although she said, "I work from awkwardness." I don't know if she felt awkwardness in photographing a woman with a cigar. The cigar is very distinctive. The girl with a cigar, or the cigar with a girl stands out. Did she mean by awkwardness that she didn't ask the girl to extinguish a cigar? The way she put the frame, like scooping the cigar with the bottom of the frame, makes me wonder what she meant by "I arrange myself." I'm not sure, but it seems to me that she didn't arrange either the situation or herself. She saw someone interesting and photographed her.

I used to think I was shy and I got incredibly persistent in the shyness. I remember enjoying enormously the situation of being put off and having to wait. I still do. I suppose I use that waiting time for a kind of nervousness, for getting calm or, I don't know, just waiting. It isn't such a productive time. It's a really boring time. I remember once I went to this female impersonator show and I waited about four hours backstage and then I couldn't photograph and they told me to come back another night. But somehow I learned to like that experience because,
while being bored I was also entranced. I mean it was boring, but it was also mysterious, people would pass. And also I had a sense of what there was to photograph that I couldn't actually photograph which I think is quite enjoyable sometimes.

-Diane Arbus-

The Chinese have a theory that you pass through boredom into fascination and I think it's true. I would never choose a subject for what it means to me or what I think about it. You've just got to choose a subject, and what you feel about it, what it means, begins to unfold if you just plain choose a subject and do it enough.

-Diane Arbus-

A camera receives what is coming from a subject. What it does is actually to take a picture of objects. How carefully or thoughtlessly are up to a photographer. She can use a roll of film, or waste it. There must be many ways. But Arbus said, "You have just got to choose a subject, and what you feel about it, what it means, begins to unfold if you just plain choose a subject and do it enough." If we really want to find "what you feel about it" and "what it means", instead of "what it means to you" and "what you feel about it", we have to wait until you feel something coming, not what you are going to catch it, or that something is going to open or unfold itself. Waiting must be boring, but if that's what you want to do, it would be enjoyable.
I have this funny thing which is that I'm never afraid when I'm looking in the ground glass. This person could be approaching with a gun or something like that and I'd have my eyes glued to the finder and it wasn't like I was really vulnerable. It just seemed terrific what was happening. I mean I'm sure there are limits. God knows, when the troops start advancing on me, you do approach that stricken feeling where you perfectly well can get killed.

-Diane Arbus-

But there's a kind of power thing about a camera. I mean everyone knows you've got some edge. You're carrying some slight magic which does something to them. It fixes them in a way.

-Diane Arbus-

Robert Frank said to me that Diane Arbus wanted to be obsessed by her idea. I understood what he meant by that. But I think that it's not clear to everybody, because there's a question about what her idea is. I'm not brave enough to express it, yet. Through writing and thinking about Arbus, I am getting gradually to feel where she stood and what she saw and how she did. I think that her work is one of the strongest in photography so far. I can tell that that strength comes from her belief that is about some magic of photography. I don't share this belief with her, although I understand what she was talking about. I don't share that idea with her, because I'm obsessed by my belief. I think that photography always gives me questions. Photography is the device that produces questions. This is what I'm obsessed with.
There's this person I've photographed a lot. I just saw her on the street one day. I was riding my bicycle on Third Avenue and she was with a friend of hers. They were enormous, both of them, almost six feet tall, and fat. I thought they were big lesbians. They went into a diner and I followed them and asked if I could photograph them. They said, "Yes, tomorrow morning." Subsequently they were apparently arrested and they spend the night in jail being booked. So the next morning I got to their house around eleven and they were just coming up the stairs after me. The first thing they said was, "I think we should tell you"—I don't know why they felt so obligated—"we're men." I was very calm but I was really sort of pleased.

-Diane Arbus-

I got to know one of them pretty well. She lives always dressed as a woman and she whores as a woman. I would never think she was a man. I can't really see the man in her. Most of the time I absolutely know but she has none of the qualities of female impersonators that I can recognize. I have gone into restaurants with her and every man in the place has turned around to look at her and made all kinds of hoots and whistles. And it was her, it wasn't me.

-Diane Arbus-

The last time I saw her I went to her birthday party. She called me up and said it was her birthday party and would I come and I said, "How terrific." It was a hotel on Broadway
and 100th Street. I've never been in a place like that in my life. I've been in some pretty awful places but the lobby was really like Hades. There were people lounging around with the whites of their eyes sort of purple and their faces all somehow violetly black and it was scary. The elevator was broken and so finally I decided to walk. It was the fourth floor and there were these people dead on their feet on the stairs. You had to step over about three or four people every flight. And then I came into her room. The birthday party was me and her, a whore friend of hers and her pimp, and the cake.

-Diane Arbus-

The thing that's important to know is that you never know. You're always sort of feeling your way.

-Diane Arbus-

One thing that struck me very early is that you don't put into a photograph what's going to come out. Or, vice versa, what comes out is not what you put in.

-Diane Arbus-

I never have taken a picture I've intended. They're always better or worse.

-Diane Arbus-

We say so many times "why" and "what". Because we often don't know why something has happened, and we so often don't know what has happened, either.
We don't have any ideas about what happens to someone in some place where we don't know. We even don't know whether something is happening or not. We just assume that something must be happening. We normally don't pay attention to it. We pay attention to news because we want to know what is happening, for example in the White House.

The time when we say "why" the most seriously would be the moment we realize that we absolutely will die in the next moment. We will accept it but we still wonder why, although we know it's the fact we can't avoid.

I photograph a woman in my room. Maybe I know what her name is, what she's doing, because I met her before. Or I've met her in front of a supermarket in the afternoon, and she's in my room to be photographed. So I will photograph her.

I photograph her like there's—a woman—in a room. Whatever I think about her, she is in my room. I have photographed her, and she is leaving my room.

How can we tell that what we thought is true? It's true that we are thinking about something. But we don't know that what we thought is true.

For me the subject of the picture is always more important than the picture. And more complicated. I do have a feeling for the print but I don't have a holy feeling for it. I really think what it is, is what it's about. I mean it has to be of something. And what it's of is always more remarkable than what it is.

-Diane Arbus-

Looking at a photograph is like watching leaves of a tree through the window of my room. It is subjective observation, because I am in my room. Being in the room makes me think about myself watching leaves.
I do feel I have some slight corner on something about the quality of things. I mean it's very subtle and a little embarrassing to me, but I really believe there are things which nobody would see unless I photographed them.

-Diane Arbus-
Part Two, The Original Plan for the Public Presentations of My Project
The studio that two exhibitions take place will be divided into two parts by using three transparent plexiglass panels. They will be hung from the ceiling and set in a line. The photographs will be hung on the two end panels. A TV monitor and the slide projector will be placed behind the center panel. Both shows will have this basic setting. The photographs, and slides and video tapes will be changed.

**SKETCH 1.**
Twelve friends of the artist will be photographed to make the prints and slides of the first show. These people, who will attend both shows, will be photographed again in the first show. The new photographs will become the material of the second show. The photographs and tapes will be in black and white.

Dates: March 16, 1981 (1st show)  
March 23, 1981 (2nd show)
Part Three, Photographic Collages of the Actual Presentations
I photographed 16 people. I went to where they were or they came to where I was. They posed for the camera and me. The background was a white wall. I invited them to see their images in the two thesis shows.
The camera was a Nikon F2. The lens was an 85mm. The developer was Agfa Rodinal. The film was Tri-X. The paper was Polycontrast Rapid, 16x20.
The people were photographed. They saw the photographs later.
The photographs of the people were then put on plexi-glass for the both shows.
The plexi-glass was hung from the ceiling.
Slide projection was also set up.
I asked Bobby and Brian to photograph.
I asked Peter to shoot video.
The people came and were photographed while they looked at their own photographic image.
The people who were photographed saw each other.
People saw people who were being photographed.
For the first show people saw slides of their images projected onto a white wall.
For the second show slides of their images projected onto the photographs.
For the second show the slides of people were projected onto the plexiglass. The image transmitted through to the wall behind, and also reflected diagonally back onto the wall which was at a right angle to the plexiglass.
Part Four, Written Description of the Presentations
How my project came to my mind was that Arno Minkkinen, who was my instructor in the graduate seminar, wanted me to try to photograph people, and his first suggestion was to photograph people in the Creative Photography Laboratory, where the class was held. Another influence was Joel Slayton, an instructor at the Visible Language Workshop, who told me, when I showed my photographs to him, that he was interested in making a book of his friends, and the people who would read and look at his book would just be people in his book—the book would circulate only among the people in it. I photographed sixteen people, who can be called my friends, because they are the people who accepted my request that they stand to be photographed by me and to come later to see their photographs hung together, without making any further questions.

I first photographed Louis Massiah, who was one of the graduate students at the Film and Video section of M.I.T., where he was editing his tapes of Haitian refugees, and others of an exhibition at the Harlem Museum in New York. I met him at one opening of the Creative Photography Laboratory. I remember we were talking about New York and artists in New York, like Andy Warhol, Ornette Coleman, and Archie Shepp, because he came from New York, and I wanted to go to New York. I think he is very interested in society. Once he told me about his project of taping people living under Grand Central Station. And he taped refugees from Haiti. Photographing him, I learned that he was a Quaker and that his brother was a Buddhist. And I said to him that I didn't know if I was a Buddhist or not, but I liked to read Buddha's books.

I photographed graduate students at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies—Greg, John, Ken, Lorilee, Peter, and Sally. I met them all on
Massachusetts Avenue just after their class and they were on the way to a Chinese restaurant to have lunch. I said to Peter, "I want to photograph you.," and he asked if I had lunch already. So we went to the restaurant and I asked everybody if I could photograph them. They knew of my project already because Paul Earls, a fellow at the C.A.V.S. and my thesis reader, had told them about it. Peter was sitting next to me and asked me why I wanted to do this project. I tried to answer his question, but I couldn't satisfy him. If I were him, I would have felt the same. That was a cold and cloudy day.

I photographed Brian Swift, who is an instructor at the C.P.L. He was working in the equipment room of the C.P.L. in the evening. So I photographed him when he was there. It seemed to me, he knew what I wanted to do and why, even though I couldn't explain the reason. Brian also did the installation with me.

I photographed the other graduate students of the C.P.L. They are Bobby, Judith, Linda, and Steven. It seemed to me that they were not interested in why I wanted to do my project. Maybe because they are photographers, so there's no question about photographing people.

I photographed Ted O'Brien, who works in the equipment room of the C.P.L. He is also a photographer.

And last, I photographed Nathan and Joaquin, who were graduate students of the V.L.W. and Rob, who is an instructor at V.L.W. They didn't ask me why. Joaquin asked me why I did not use video-tape instead of still photographs. He said that I should photograph people from tape. He meant that first I should video-tape people and then photograph them from that tape. I think he was interested in seeing how things change when they go through different media. He was interested in transformation of image
when we use two different kinds of media. But that was not what I was interested in.

I was not interested in the photographs of people. What I was interested in is the fact that people have something in their minds, things I can't photograph, but that I know are in their minds. I photograph their faces, because there is something behind their faces, that is the thing that made me photograph them. To me, photographing them is to think about what's in them, like on the beach watching the sky, and what's there under the sky which I'm looking at; or watching someone's house from the outside, and think about who is living in it. Or while watching the paintings in the cave, you are thinking about what was in their minds when ancient men painted them. I think about what was in their minds. Thinking about what they are thinking. Things that only the person who actually is thinking it can carry or make alive, like tropical animals can't live in the North Pole, is the thing I am really interested in. It's like you are not me, because you are the person who knows what you are thinking, you are the person who can touch your mind.

A photograph of you, that is the evidence that you were there, you had things in your mind, and you were alive. I met you, I spoke with you, I felt something about you, I denied you, I hate you, or I like you. You saw me. You laugh with me, you make me happy, and you gaze in my eyes as if you want to see what's inside of me. But you never know except for what you guess. You may feel it's quite sure, what you felt from me. You can't carry me, you can't carry things inside of me, if you do it, I will die. Things that you felt and things I felt won't cross. They can get closer and closer if you see someone and speak with someone more, but they
never will cross. It's too bad.

I can see what's behind you; trees, railroad track, wind, and the sky, which you can't see. You can see things behind me, which I can't see. When I see you, you are in the center of the things that you can't see. I can't see inside of you, you are hiding in you, but you allow me to see what's behind, which you can't see.

You are in front of the white wall, I see you and the wall, and what can I say? I don't want to say anything about you, you know you. What's in you? Who are you? Tell me. Please don't forget to bring "you" to your picture in the show.

When you look at a photograph, then you will get something in your mind, and you think those things in your mind are what the photographer wanted to say to you. I think you are wrong. That's what you thought. That's your idea. That's not the photographer's idea. Maybe it's extremely close, but it's still yours. What you feel about a photograph must be yours. I wonder if you want to feel what someone else felt. What you think must come from yourself. When I took your picture, I didn't care what you would feel about what I thought about you. I cared what you thought about you. When Joel Slayton saw my photographs, he said, it's like a fashion photograph. Except for one thing, what he said to me makes sense. There is one big difference. That is, of course, the model herself cares how clothes fit her, but more than that the photographer cares about how well he can make a reader of magazine image what they will look like in those clothes. A photographer and a publisher want to give you a dream. They are crazy to find a nice construction which the reader will actually buy and wear. What I did is like a fashion photographer but there
is no reader besides the model of the photograph. You are really interested in how you look. If I show your picture, you must feel yourself. To see how you look will give you ideas of who you are, I'm interested in what you think about you, but you don't need to tell it. I know what I thought about you. If I want to show your photograph to someone else other than you, I want to express what I feel about you. Or, if I want to say something to you, I will leave some evidence that we can read. But this is not what I wanted to do for the show.

People say that we all see the same kind of dream. We have the experience that we are falling down from the sky when we are sleeping in a bed. I did read about this dream, Someone did research and found that this dream occurs all over the world, in Europe, Africa, Asia, North and South America and the rest of the places on the earth. We don't have wings; we don't fly. If there's someone who can fly, he is no longer a man. He must be something else. Can you think about how his ability makes him different from us? He is in the sky. But in reality, we are very similar; there are cultural differences, the color of skin, eyes, etc., those differences that come from how man has adjusted to different environmental conditions. We are all thirsty in the desert and on an island, some people try to find an oasis, and others wait for rain. They do different things, but what they want is the same thing. I saw France from a window of the airplane. It was not Japan or the United States. It was just France, May, 1980. Japanese and Americans are not French. We have the same kind of dreams. I'm not you, and you are not me.

People who I photographed came to see the photographs, I put them on the plexi-glasses that were hung from the ceiling. There were four
glasses. Each one had four photographs. The lighting was spot lights. The studio was dim. I asked Peter to shoot video that was shown live on the monitor, of what the other people were doing. Some people were talking, and some were watching the monitor. They were watching what they were doing. The slides that I projected were the shots of those sixteen people. We could not see the projection at the same time that we were looking at the photographs and the monitor, except when Peter focused on the projection. Because the projection was on the other side of the photographs. I asked Bobby and Brian to photograph people. The tape that was shot by Peter, and the photographs and the slides that were taken by Bobby and Brian were the materials for a second show. I don't mean that they are bad cameramen, just it's not a creative job, so the tapes and the photographs are a kind of empty. I wanted to photograph those sixteen people there. This situation, shooting in front of the photographs in the dim exhibit and using straight flash, doesn't create too much expression, but no matter how the situation is, people were there, and they had something in their minds, because they're living. That is important to me.

I had the second show two weeks later; in the original plan, it was to follow in one week, but there was school vacation, so I shifted the date one week. Also in the original plan, there was no change in the setting, I was going to use the same setting in both the first and second ones. But I changed the projection of the slides, by projecting them on the photographs on the plexi-glass, which were not big enough, so some part of the image from the slides fell on the wall behind the glasses, and the glasses made reflections on the walls of the studio. They were distorted, because of the angle of the light. They were all over the studio.
That was the day President Reagan was shot.

I say to myself: the day my camera was stolen was the same day but one year later that John Lennon was killed. Or I remember that the day that I spoke with Peter was cloudy and cold, and how I felt the air that I breathed, whether it was heavy or light, or what kind of smell. I remember the air in the Chinese restaurant. The smell is different in the bar and the pizza place. When I was much younger, Sunday, I was totally tired of being in bed, and I knew that it would take long, long time until my parents woke up, so I didn't know how I could waste time until then. I hated Sundays. I became so desperate and the strange taste that I still remember always came to my tongue. That was very unpleasant, and artificial, I can't describe it, but anyway the taste is not welcome to me. That's memory, and that's how people remember things, if we have a point in the past, then we recall many things by thinking about that point in our mind.

Looking at photographs is, in some way, similar to recalling our memory. Actually photography is recalling memory. But it normally, maybe more than normally, makes me wonder about what I remember. Because what I remember and what I photographed don't look like the same thing at all. When I just started photographing, that struck me. Of course, I recognize what I photographed. It is not the same, how I looked at a thing and how that thing looks in a photograph. If I photograph something, it is like having two memories. One is in my brain, and the other one is in the photograph. I said that my memory and a photograph are totally different, but they are not quite. I exaggerated too much. They in some way look like each other, but in another way they are very different. I think
what I wanted to say is that there is some feeling that you have when you see a photograph; about not how there is total connection between what you saw and what you photographed. Diane Arbus called it the gap that you intended to do one way, and the photograph came another way. Maybe you will say that you don't photograph the way you want to. But still you won't get what you wanted. No matter how tricky or straightforward you are, a photograph comes the way it comes. You still don't know how a photograph will come.

When you look at someone else's photograph, you don't know how that photograph came. That's normally what we call looking at photographs. In this situation, a photograph will overwrap anything in your mind, and you will be in bottomless world where you can think anything. But if you are in the photographer or you were there, the photograph becomes a point in the past. It is the point that you refer to. The photograph doesn't need to be the same as what you remember. It's different, but it doesn't mean that the photograph disturbs you. You will say that the thing in your mind is "A", but that the thing in the photograph looks like "B". Maybe it was "B", but the photograph made you say that it was "A". That's what you remember. I think "B" in the photograph reinforced "A" that you remember.

I photographed sixteen people where they were. They came to see their photographs, and again they were photographed. And I asked them come to see them again. The photographs and the shows were a vessel in which I wanted to hold those our memories. The photographs were all taken in front of white plain background, and the lighting was very straight light that came from the strobe on the top of the camera. In the shot
they were watching the camera, very straight, emotionless. But for the person who was photographed, although the photograph just gives us how they look, when we see the person looking at his own photograph, we really don't know what he is thinking: I think there must be something that strikes him. I honestly, don't know if he was thinking at the time when I photographed him. Or, by watching his photograph, he might be kind of confused, because he could not find the certain point in the past, in the photograph that was taken in front of white background, as if he felt that he was attacked in a very sudden way by all this vastness, all memory in his life. When I see myself by chance, unexpectedly somewhere in a town, I remember that it is shocking somehow. I do not know what it is.

If they were shocked, and if this is true, I didn't intend to do that. But it was true that people seemed uncomfortable. It was different, when I showed the print to them privately. I showed each print to the person before the show to get their consent. And I thought that many people liked their shots.

In the second show people seemed more relaxed. There were video tapes from the first show, and they were sitting in the pillows and watching the tapes. Also the reflection of the slide projection from the plexiglass was something that they could look at.

I don't know how much I got what I wanted to do. I have been trying to write what I intended to do. I don't know how much you understand, or about what I wrote, how clear it is getting. Louis said that it was a good show, and Ken said it was awful. Many people didn't say anything.